

# Press Release

From the Office of

**Supervisor Neil Derry**

County of San Bernardino, Third District

[www.sbcounty.gov/derry](http://www.sbcounty.gov/derry)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Crafton Hills Fire Suspect in Custody**

*16-year-old suspected in more than a dozen other fires*

SAN BERNARDINO, CA – Supervisor Neil Derry praised the quick action of Good Samaritans and the Sheriff's Department for apprehending a 16-year-old seen in the area of where the Crafton Hills fire originated.

The teen was arrested on suspicion of arson Wednesday afternoon. Authorities believe he started the blaze that has burned 350 acres and forced the closure of Crafton Hills College. He is also a suspect in more than a dozen other fires.

Arson is a terrorist act that causes extreme levels of fear and panic and endangers the lives of innocent people and firefighters. Perpetrators of such senseless crimes deserve to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

**“The most effective way to prevent future arson is to quickly capture and arrest the people responsible for these crimes,”** Supervisor Derry said. **“The witnesses responsible for the capturing of this suspect are to be praised and commended.”**

Due to the fine work of our highly trained and experienced firefighters, the fire has not destroyed any structures, Derry said. The primary role of government is to protect life and property.

**“Fire emergencies necessitate rapid response regardless of the budget realities and all available resources and assets will be used to combat any threat to public safety,”** Supervisor Derry said.

The costs associated with battling the fire will be significant and burdensome for state and local agencies that are already facing difficult budget realities in the current economic climate. Government does not have an unlimited source of funds and taxpayer money used to fight a fire means that those funds cannot be used in a more productive manner.

**“Taxpayers do not wish to see their money wasted on fires set by arsonists,”** Supervisor Derry stated. **“Those responsible for these crimes should be held financially liable.”**